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# Colby Admits CIA Delayed on Watergate

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (AP) — CIA Director William E. Colby says agency officials could have given Watergate information to the prosecution earlier than they did, but they delayed out of fear that the CIA role in the scandal would be sensationalized.

Colby said the concern among CIA officials following the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in was that the agency's tangential involvement in the affair

might be blown out of proportion.

His statements were made in reply to an allegation by Seymour M. Hersh, the New York Times reporter who first wrote about the CIA's illegal domestic spy operations.

HERSH, participating with Colby in a panel discussion at the annual meeting of Associated Press managing editors, said the CIA "could have blown the

whistle at any time" on Watergate.

"I think Sy is right," Colby said. "In fact, we didn't fall all over ourselves rushing to the policemen."

Hersh noted that two days after the break-in at the Democratic National Committee's headquarters, top CIA officials discussed the fact that former White House aide John D. Ehrlichman had asked the agency to give covert aid to E. Howard Hunt Jr.

The assistance in the

form of a wig and other material, was used by Hunt in connection with an earlier break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Hersh said CIA officials were aware on June 19 that Hunt also was linked to the Watergate burglary. Hunt was indicted in connection with the Watergate break-in Sept. 15.

HERSH NOTED that CIA officials were ordered at a White House meeting June 23, 1972, to tell the FBI to limit its Watergate investigation, but it wasn't until late October or November that Colby finally told what he knew to the prosecutors.

Colby admitted there are many aspects of CIA involvement in Watergate "that we're not proud of," but he called for a responsible approach to examination of the agency. He said current investigations of the CIA "are basically bringing to light the things that the intelligence community found and corrected."

He said congressional investigations of the agency's activities would serve a useful purpose if they produced better guidelines for the CIA, better supervision of the agency and improved the nation's ability to keep vital secrets.